




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR LOGAN

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COMMUNITY SERVICES INDUSTRY (PORTABLE LONG SERVICE LEAVE) BILL

 **Mr POWER** (Logan—ALP) (12.55 pm): I rise to support the Community Services Industry (Portable Long Service Leave) Bill as I think it fairly enhances the working conditions of those who work in the community services sector in Queensland. During this time of COVID-19 we know there are people who are reaching out for help from this sector who perhaps thought they would never in their lives reach out for this type of assistance. We know there are stressors on families and individuals who thought they were so robust they could take anything thrown at them. They know this government is focused on recovering and unifying Queenslanders. We know those people who are reaching out are sometimes experiencing the toughest parts of their lives they could ever imagine, so it is right that we recognise those in the sector who seek to give them that helping hand.

We know that workers in the community services sector have a tough job working to help vulnerable Queenslanders during the most difficult period of their lives. We know that many in the sector are not motivated by big pay or conditions, but by a love of community and a love of their fellow Queenslanders who are hurting and in great need. However, this bill is important because it will ensure that despite the nature of their employment they will receive the long service recognition they deserve.

Workers in this sector can in some cases move from contract to contract and employer to employer. Generally, the long service leave that a member builds up under one contract is not able to follow the employee from organisation to organisation, creating a difference after 10 years of service between different employers. The portable long service leave scheme this bill puts in place will mean that the employer contributes to long service leave liabilities through a central fund.

Mr Powell interjected.

Mr POWER: Are you right there, member for Glass House? Is there any—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kelly): Member for Logan, I will manage the House. Order, members!

Mr POWER: It is disappointing, member for Glass House, because this is important. Portable long service leave means that the employer will contribute their long service leave liabilities to a central fund—I hope you do support that—which can then be used to pay long service leave for those in the industry who have contributed enough service. This should prove attractive to those thinking of working in the industry. It is an incentive to build up long service leave in the community services sector. We know that for many employees the insecurity of going from contract to contract—as the Deloitte report highlighted—means that they sometimes wonder whether it is worth it. When something is particularly difficult it makes this type of service work really stressful for them and it makes them ask themselves, ‘Is it worth it?’

These people have enormous skills and reservoirs of compassion and knowledge about their sector, and if we lose that because there is no incentive to continue we will lose people who have so much to contribute to those in need. We know that they provide Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community services, accommodation support services for those who are homeless through domestic

violence or simply through job losses—which we are seeing more of during COVID—and alcohol and drug services. We know the enormous benefit that gives us economically. If someone recovers from periods of alcoholism and drug abuse it means they can be a massive contributor to Queensland, whereas if they succumb to alcohol and drug abuse they might be lost firstly to their families and those who love them dearly and also to the economy.

We know that child safety and support services as well as community development services are vital. This is especially important in communities like mine that are growing so quickly. Yarrabilba, Flagstone and the Park Ridge area are all brand-new communities with huge amounts of enthusiasm but little structure and traditional community. We want to inject into them some of those services. Flagstone is moving ahead with a community centre. We have our own community health hub at the school. That is where we are binding people together and getting them the services they need and connecting them with people, and it is those very people who will benefit.